

Appl. No. 09/927,173
Amdt. Dated March 28, 2005
Reply to Office Action of January 4, 2005

Attorney Docket No. 81800.0164
Customer No.: 26021

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Minor changes are made to this specification to correct typographical errors. Claim 1 is amended. New claims 6-11 are added. Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found in the Specification at p. 11, paras. [0035] and [0036]. Support for new claim 6 can be found in the Specification, for instance, at pp. 11-12, para. [0041]. Support for new claims 7 and 8 can be found in the Specification, for instance, at p. 20, para. [0075]. Support for new claim 8 can be found in the Specification, for instance, at pp. 11-12, para. [0041]. Support for new claim 9 can be found in the Specification, for instance, Fig. 3. Support for new claim 10 can be found in the Specification, for instance, at p. 9, para. [0039].

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kobayashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,991,592). Claim 1 is amended. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection as to the amended claims.

The present invention relates to a duplex automatic document feeder employed inside an image forming apparatus such as a copying machine (Applicant's Specification, at para. [0002]). Claim 1, as amended is as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A duplex automatic document feeder comprising:
 - a document stacking tray for stacking a set of documents;
 - a document separating/feeding unit having a document feeding port for separating the set of documents and feeding the documents one by one from the uppermost document thereof;
 - an image reading unit for reading the image data on the first side of the document passing the image reading position;

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a document inverting unit for inverting the document feeding direction to read the image data on the second side of the document which passes the image reading position after the reading of the first side has been completed;

a document discharging unit for piling up the documents on the document-discharging tray after the front and the reverse side of the document of which both-sides have been read is reversed, with the document not passing on the image reading position;

a first transporting path for guiding the document from the document separating/feeding unit to the image reading position and having a document set sensor near the document feeding port in the first transporting path ;

a second transporting path for guiding the document from the said image reading position to the document inverting unit;

a third transporting path for guiding the document from the said document inverting unit to a first intersecting point of the first transporting path and from this first intersecting point to the said image reading position, wherein a first position detecting sensor is located near the first intersecting point;

a fourth transporting path for guiding the document from a second intersecting point in the midst of the said third transporting path to the said document discharging unit, wherein a second position detecting sensor is located near the second intersecting point; and

a switching member employed in the said second intersecting point which switches the document feeding path from the said document inverting unit to the third transporting path or the fourth transporting path from this intersecting point.

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Applicant respectfully submits that Kobayashi cannot anticipate amended claim 1 because Kobayashi fails to either teach or suggest all the limitations of amended claim 1. As amended, claim 1 requires the combination of a document set sensor, a first position detecting sensor and a second position detecting sensor. Kobayashi does not teach such a combination, and as such, Kobayashi cannot anticipate the claimed invention. As such, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of amended claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4 depend from amended claim 1 and are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 2-4 is respectfully requested.

Further with respect to claim 4, applicant has clarified claim 4 so that it requires "the said document inverting unit and the said document discharging unit are comprised of not more than three rollers neighboring one another" as is shown in Applicant's specification, at Fig. 3 (and described in the accompanying text.) Applicant respectfully suggests that Kobayashi cannot anticipate claim 4 because Kobayashi fails to teach that "the said document inverting unit and the said document discharging unit are comprised of not more than three rollers" as is required by amended claim 4. The document inverting unit and the document discharging unit are comprised of 4 rollers (See Fig. 1, ref. 61, 62, 81, 82) and as such do not fall within the limitation of claim 4. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 4 for this additional reason is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Kobayashi in view of Takida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,618,575). Claim 5 depends from claim 1 and therefore contains all the limitations of claim 1. Takida et al. does not teach a document set sensor, a first position detecting sensor and a second position detecting sensor, and is not relied upon by the Office for doing so. As such, the combined teaches of Kobayashi and Takida et al. cannot render present claim 5

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obvious because the combined teachings do not teach or suggest each limitation of claim 5. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 5 is respectfully requested.

New claims 6-11 depend from amended claim 1 either directly or through intervening claims. As such, claims 6-11 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Allowance of claims 6-11 is respectfully requested.

Further with respect to claim 9, claim 9 requires that the axes of three rollers of the document inverting unit and the said document discharging unit "are aligned when viewed from the side." Kobayashi has no such requirement. As is clearly shown in Fig. 1, the axes of the rollers comprising the document inverting unit and discharging unit of Kobayashi are not aligned. As such, claim 9 is patentable for at least this additional reason.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 337-6700 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

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If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: March 28, 2005

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